Montana Response to Intervention: RTI Framework

The Office of Public Instruction
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Foreword

Response to Intervention (RTI) is the practice of providing high-quality instruction to all students while using ongoing assessments to monitor student progress to make data-based instructional decisions through collaborative team processes. The RTI Framework for Implementation manual provides an overview of the RTI framework for Montana schools who are implementing RTI.

It is the philosophy of the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) that an RTI structure within a school should be developed according to local autonomous decisions based upon local culture, resources, and needs. The RTI framework described in this manual provides a basic composition of essential, non-negotiable components. There are many elements around those basic components that should be decided locally in order for the process to be effective in any particular community. Full implementation and sustainability of RTI requires strong building leadership and collaborative relationships among school educators, staff, parents, and community.

The Montana Office of Public Instruction is committed to providing optimal learning conditions that support academic achievement for all students. When implemented with fidelity an RTI framework has the potential for meeting this commitment through the implementation of a multi-tiered system of support based on scientific evidence. The process also emphasizes the importance of: local school principals as instructional leaders, the use of data to guide instruction, appropriate intervention and practice, parent involvement, and other research-based practices.

Due to Montana's diversity in student populations, varied resources, geographic areas, and rural, urban and suburban populations, it is expected that no two school districts or even school buildings will implement RTI in precisely the same way. With that in mind, this framework has been designed for schools and districts choosing to implement RTI. The successful implementation of RTI requires strong building leadership and a deep commitment by educators and staff. The Montana Office of Public Instruction is dedicated to improving the academic and social behavioral success of all students.

"All educators for all children."

Office of Public Instruction

Response to Intervention:
RTI Framework

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RTI Guiding Principles

- Effective schools use a team approach to make data-based decisions for individual students to increase student achievement.

- Schools utilize data from universal screenings and ongoing assessment practices to make informed decisions about student needs.

- Strong leadership at the state, district, and school levels is essential to improving teaching and learning.

- Students should be taught all skills necessary for success: academic, social, behavioral, and emotional.

- Schools and communities must work together to meet the diverse needs of students and honor the traditions and contributions of both family and community members.

- Successful schools provide ongoing training for staff.

- All teachers believe in and are invested in helping all students to be successful.

- Schools need support and specialized training from the state in order to meet the needs of teachers and students.

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Introduction to Response to Intervention/Instruction (RTI)

Response to Intervention (RTI) has been defined by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) as "the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals and applying child response data to important educational decisions" (Batsche et al., 2005, p. 3). There are eight non-negotiable essential components of RTI:

1. Evidence-based Curriculum and Instruction
2. Ongoing Assessment
3. Collaborative Teaming
4. Data-Based Decision Making
5. Fidelity of Implementation
6. Ongoing Training and Professional Development
7. Community and Family Involvement
8. Strong Leadership

Each element is part of an interrelated process which should be applied to *every* student. Essentially, instructional practices are evaluated and adjusted based on results of reliable, valid, and sensitive indicators of important student outcomes. If any component is missing, the process breaks down.

The RTI is an instructional, assessment, and intervention process for systematically delivering instruction, monitoring student progress, and making decisions about the need for intensifying instruction. The RTI is a proactive process that enables learning for all students by providing both prevention and intervention services. The fundamental question that RTI addresses is: "Under what conditions will a student successfully demonstrate a satisfactory response to the curriculum?"

The RTI creates an integrated and seamless continuum of service that encompasses all staff through a multi-tiered service delivery model. It requires effective building leadership and ongoing collaboration among educators with a motto of *"all educators for all students."* RTI is the practice of: (a) providing high-quality instruction/intervention matched to all students' needs and (b) using assessment to determine a student's learning rate and level of performance to (c) make important educational decisions to guide instruction. The RTI practices incorporate both prevention and intervention activities and are effective at all levels.

Figure 1. Montana 3-Tiers of Instruction

Multi-tiered System of Support

A multi-tiered system of support provides guidance for delivering comprehensive, quality instruction for all students. An RTI framework is designed to provide evidence-based instruction and targeted interventions that lead to student success.

ALL: Core Classroom Instruction

All students should receive core classroom instruction utilizing scientifically based curriculum and methods to teach critical elements of a subject (reading, math, written expression), e.g., 80-90 percent of students will have a sufficient response to instruction by demonstrating subject proficiency with effective Tier 1 instruction. Students who score at the higher level of Tier 1 should be receiving instruction that will continue to keep them challenged.

### SOME: Strategic Targeted Instruction

Some students will receive strategically targeted instruction in addition to core instruction. Strategic Instruction addresses the specific needs of students who do not make sufficient subject progress in Tier 1. Tier 2 interventions are targeted to teach specific skill needs, are scientifically based, and align with core classroom instruction. Approximately 5-10 percent of students will require Tier 2 instruction. Instruction is generally provided in a small group (3-5 students) format with similarly skilled students. The duration of this instruction varies based on student assessment and progress monitoring data that measures student response to intervention.

FEW: Intensive Targeted Intervention

Intensive targeted instruction is provided to the most at-risk students who have not responded sufficiently to Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction. This small percentage (1-8%) of students usually have severe skill difficulties and require instruction that is more explicit, more intensive, and specifically designed to meet individual needs. Intensive instruction should take place in addition to Tier 1 instruction; however, it may, in a few instances, replace core instruction. Students needing targeted Tier 3 interventions will have additional instruction daily (e.g., 90 minutes of Tier 1 instruction plus 60-90 minutes of intervention instruction). Tier 3 intervention may replace Tier 2 instruction and should be provided by the most qualified teacher within a small group of two to five students. The duration of this intervention is extended over a longer period of time and varies based on student assessment and progress monitoring data.

Student Movement Through the Tiers

Student movement through the tiers is a fluid process based on student assessment data and collaborative team decisions about students' response to instruction. A goal of the process is to accelerate learning so that students exit intervention. At any time during this process, a student may be referred for consideration for a 504 Plan and/or special education evaluation.
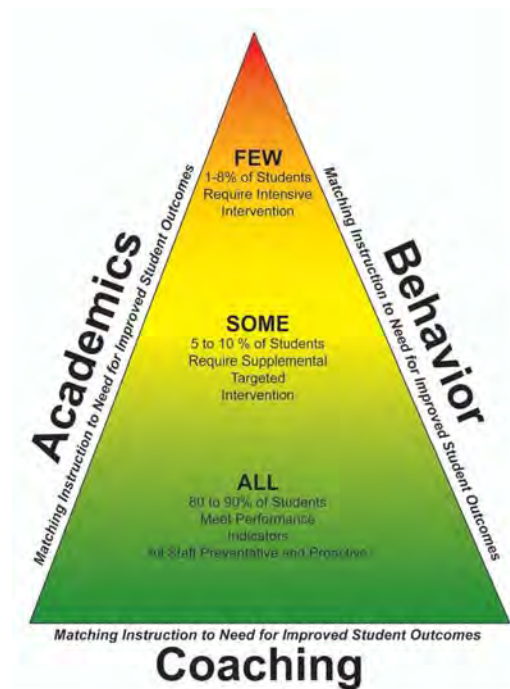
K-6 Tier 1 Core Classroom Instruction for All Students

TIER 1 refers to classroom instruction for *all* students that utilizes evidenced-based materials and practices to teach core subject areas (e.g., reading, written expression, and math). Assessment data is used to monitor and maintain the ongoing cycle of skill success. Screening or benchmark assessments are administered within the first four weeks of the school year to *all* students to identify students at risk for skill difficulty. Screening or benchmark assessments are administered at least two other times during the year (winter and spring) to determine if students are making progress, need extra support, and instruction is planned accordingly. Differentiated instruction occurs in flexible small groups within the instructional time. Outcome assessments are also administered to *all* students to determine student growth/gain over time (3rd grade +: MontCAS).
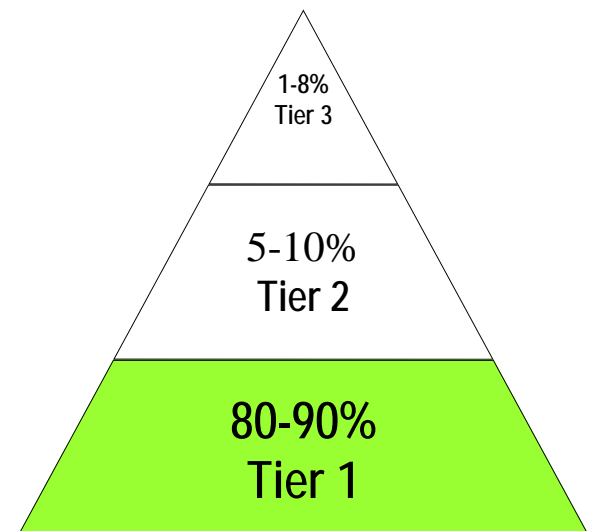
Figure 2. Tier 1

1-8%
Tier 3

5-10%
Tier 2

80-90%
Tier 1

Table 1. Tier 1 Essential Elements of Instruction

Component	Instruction
Curriculum	• Evidence-based core curriculum and instructional materials in core subjects areas
Instructional Organization	• Large group instruction of skills • Small differentiated group instruction for application of skills, re-teaching, additional practice, and/or challenge activities as determined by benchmark and progress monitoring data
Instructor	• Teacher (or other specialist) trained to teach programs being taught
Assessment	• Benchmark screenings, (at least 3 times per year), outcome-based assessments, ongoing program, and informal for *all* students • Parents informed of student progress on a regular basis
Time	• Core instruction provided daily -Recommend K-3: 90 minutes reading instruction -Recommend 4-6: 60-90 minutes reading instruction • Applications of skills throughout the day across all content areas
Setting	• General education classroom
Support	• Home practice and support • Additional tutoring or peer-tutoring to provide practice at school • Use of trained paraprofessionals to provide practice opportunities • Encouragement of parent-school partnerships • Parent training as needed • Professional development for school personnel • Ongoing verification for fidelity of implementation

K-6 Tier 2 Strategic Targeted Intervention

Tier 2 refers to evidence-based targeted supplemental skill-building intervention. This instruction is matched with the specific skill deficits of students who fail to meet Tier 1 benchmarks in core subjects. Tier 2 instruction is systematic, explicit, and aligned with Tier 1 instruction. Instructional interventions are typically delivered in small groups of students with similar skill building needs. Instruction is scaffolded and based on the needs of individual students as determined by assessment data.
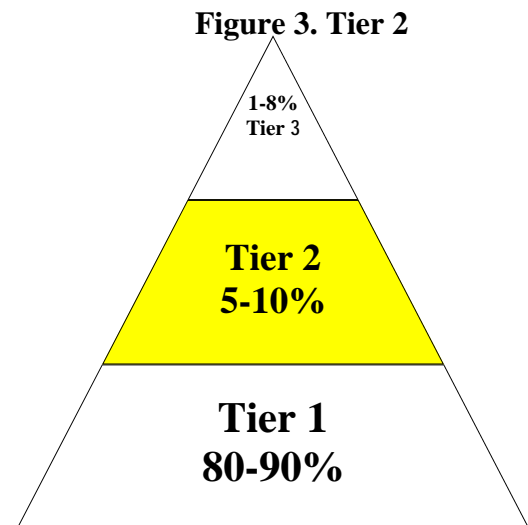
Figure 3. Tier 2

1-8%
Tier 3

**Tier 2
5-10%**

**Tier 1
80-90%**

Table 2. Tier 2 Essential Elements of Instructional Intervention

Components	Instruction
Curriculum and Materials	• Evidence-based core curriculum and instructional materials in core subject areas • Evidence-based intervention materials and strategies that supplement Tier 1 instruction
Instructional Organization	• Homogeneous groups • Explicit instruction targeting special skill deficits • Pre-teach and Re-teach targeted skills • Opportunities for review, practice, and feedback
Instructor	• Teacher, reading specialist, special education teacher, ELL teacher, speech/language pathologists, or other specialists trained to teach programs being taught
Assessment	• Tier 1 benchmark screening plus • Diagnostic and ongoing progress monitoring -monthly, bi-weekly, or weekly • Parents informed of student progress on a regular basis
Time	• 20 to 60 minutes daily in addition to general classroom Tier 1 instruction
Setting	• General education classroom *or* other appropriate setting
Support	• Home practice and support • Before and after-school programs • Additional tutoring and/or peer tutoring to provide practice at school • Parent training • Use of trained paraprofessionals to provide support to the classroom teacher as he/she provides Tier 2 instruction • Instructional teams such as: literacy team, math team, grade-level team, or student support team • Professional development for all school personnel • Ongoing verification for fidelity of implementation

K-6 Tier 3 Intensive Targeted Intervention

Tier 3 refers to evidence-based intensive targeted interventions for students who have not responded adequately to Tier 1 or Tier 2 supplemental, targeted instruction. This small percentage of students usually have severe and multiple skill difficulties and require instruction that is more explicit, more intensive, and specifically designed to meet individual needs. Diagnostic and weekly or bi-weekly progress monitoring assessments are utilized extensively with this group of students to inform instruction and to provide appropriate, targeted intervention, materials, and strategies. Tier 3 instruction takes place in addition to Tier 1. If progress monitoring and diagnostic assessments indicate that a student is not making adequate progress, a student may need a replacement of the core program (Tier 1 instruction) or be referred for further evaluation.
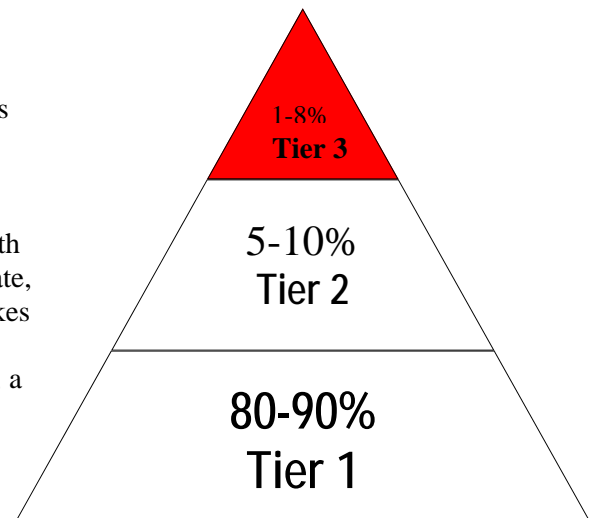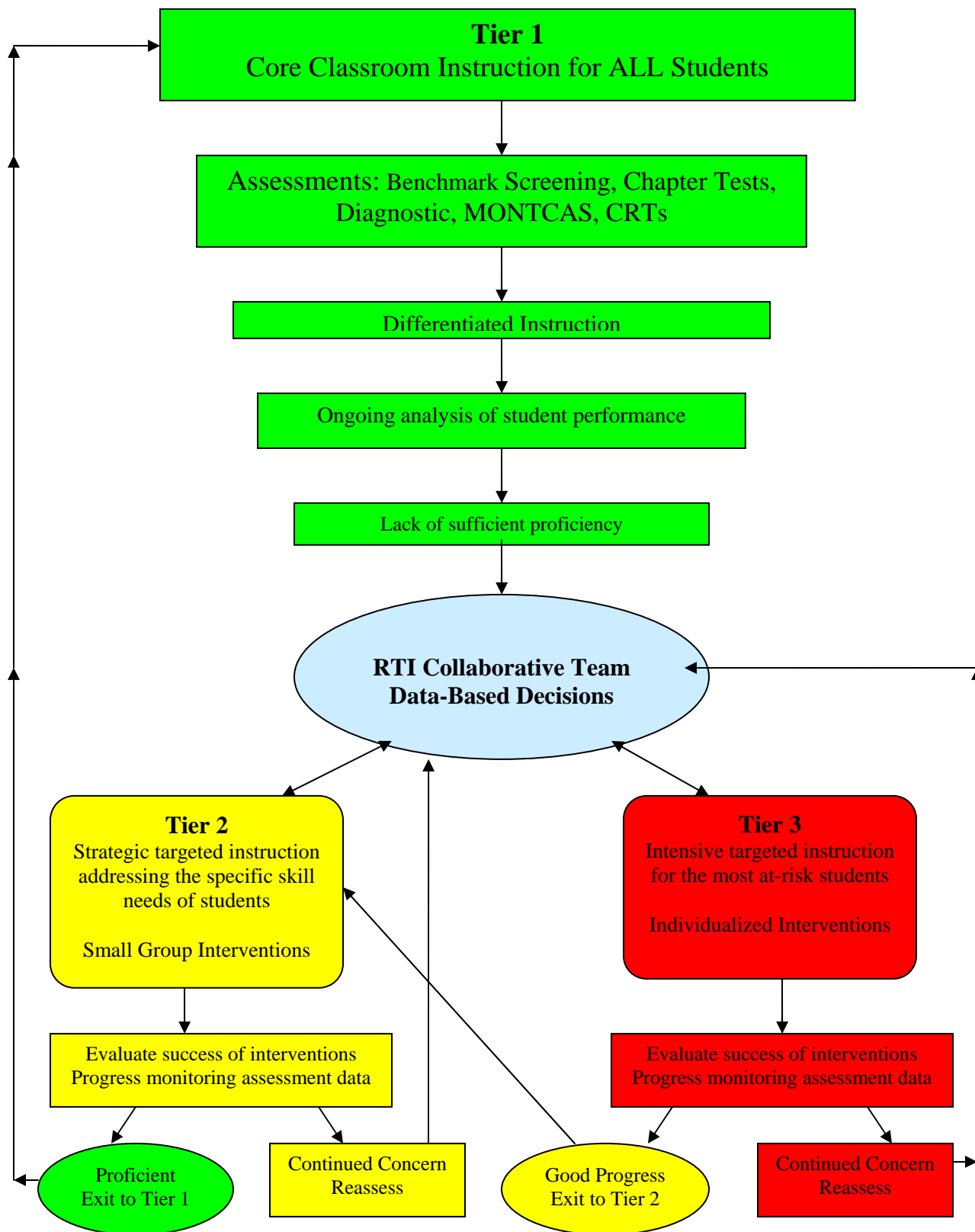
Figure 4. Tier 3

1-8%
Tier 3

5-10%
Tier 2

80-90%
Tier 1

Table 3. Tier 3 Essential Elements of Instruction

Components	Instruction
Curriculum and Materials	• Continue Tier 1 and possibly Tier 2 instruction • Evidence-based intervention materials and strategies that supplement Tier 1 instruction • Programs and strategies emphasize skill building in areas of need as identified through diagnostic assessments • Possible replacement of the core program, **when appropriate**
Instructional Organization	• Explicit instruction targeting specific skill deficits • Individual or small, homogeneous groups (2-3) • Pre-teach and re-teach targeted skills • Opportunities for review, practice, and feedback • Use of multi-sensory approaches, as appropriate
Instructor	• Teacher, reading specialist, special education teacher, ELL teacher, speech/language pathologists, or other specialists trained to teach programs being taught
Assessment	• Tier 1 benchmark screening plus • Diagnostic assessments and ongoing progress-monitoring Weekly or bi-weekly • Parents informed of student progress on a regular basis
Time	• 30-90 minutes daily in addition to Tier 1 classroom instruction
Setting	• Appropriate setting within the school
Support	• Instructional teams such as: literacy team, math team, grade-level team, or student support team • Use of trained support personnel to provide practice opportunities • Provision of parent training as needed for home practice and support • Additional tutoring programs • Home practice and support • Parent Training • Before and after-school programs • Ongoing verification for fidelity of implementation

Figure 5. — **The Schoolwide RTI Decision-Making Process** —

Tier 1
Core Classroom Instruction for ALL Students

Assessments: Benchmark Screening, Chapter Tests, Diagnostic, MONTCAS, CRTs

Differentiated Instruction

Ongoing analysis of student performance

Lack of sufficient proficiency

**RTI Collaborative Team
Data-Based Decisions**

Tier 2
Strategic targeted instruction addressing the specific skill needs of students

Small Group Interventions

Tier 3
Intensive targeted instruction for the most at-risk students

Individualized Interventions

Evaluate success of interventions
Progress monitoring assessment data

Evaluate success of interventions
Progress monitoring assessment data

Proficient
Exit to Tier 1

Continued Concern
Reassess

Good Progress
Exit to Tier 2

Continued Concern
Reassess

Figure 6.   *Fluid* **Student Movement Through the 3-Tier RTI Process**
Flexible Service Options*

Tier 1
Core classroom instruction for ALL students

Mastery

Assessments:
Screening, Chapter Tests, MONTCAS, CRTs

Struggling Learners

Yes

Tier 2
Strategic Targeted Intervention

Assessments:
CBM Progress Monitoring, Skill Diagnostics

Yes   Meet Exit Criteria/Mastery

No

Tier 3**
Intensive Targeted Intervention

Students with severe skill deficits

May continue in Tier 2 consider increasing intensity or change intervention OR move to Tier 3

Assessments:
Diagnostic, CBM Progress Monitoring

Yes   Meet Exit Criteria   No

May continue in Tier 3 and consider increasing intensity

*   **Flexible Service Options:** At any time during the RTI process, a student may be referred for evaluation for accommodations and modifications via a 504 plan and/or special education services.

** Based on assessment data and instructional team collaboration, students identified as having severe skill or learning deficits may be directly referred for Tier 3 intervention.   12

What RTI _Is_ and What It _Is Not_

The RTI represents a fundamental shift in how schools go about identifying and responding to students' academic difficulties; therefore, it is essential to be very clear about what RTI *is* and what RTI *is not*.

Table 4. What Truths and Myths

RTI *Truths…*	RTI *Myths …*
RTI is an initiative that supports general education school improvement goals	RTI is a stand-alone special education initiative
RTI is intended to help as many students as possible meet proficiency standards without special education	RTI is a means for just getting more students into special education
RTI is a method to unify general and special education in order to benefit students through greater continuity of services	RTI is a method for just increasing or decreasing special education numbers
RTI is focused primarily on effective instruction to enhance student growth	RTI is focused primarily on disability determination and documented through a checklist

The RTI is a significant opportunity for educators to come together to resolve children's learning problems by focusing first on students' instructional needs and only secondly on a student's possible need for special education assistance. In this light, RTI is more about *what* will be done than *where* it will be done. The RTI is also about *how* the job will get done and less about *who* will get it done. The RTI requires educators to change how they view student difficulties and disabilities. The RTI procedures turn attention away from identifying deficits within the student (e.g., processing difficulties) and toward evaluating child progress over time, through age-based comparisons, and rates of learning. Therefore, students' academic performance is compared to the performance of other students in their school or district (normative expectations for minimum proficiency) and student learning is evaluated based on how quickly that student acquires instructed material (learning rate). The effect is that educators are able to focus on how much and what types of instruction students need, which increases accountability for student learning.

RTI and Special Education

The RTI is intended to ensure that all students are provided high-quality instruction with fidelity. By using RTI, schools can provide interventions to students as soon as a need arises. This is very different, for example, from the methods associated with the aptitude-achievement discrepancy models traditionally utilized for specific learning disability (SLD) identification which have been criticized as a "wait to fail" approach. The reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) allows school districts to use scientific, research-based interventions as one component of the eligibility determination process.

The RTI addresses the prevention of reading difficulties by **establishing effective classroom practices that meet the needs of struggling students**. Classrooms are characterized by differentiated instruction based on data from ongoing assessments. In order to determine the presence of a specific learning disability, a clear history of the provision of scientific research-based reading instruction must be documented. Only after interventions have been implemented with fidelity over sufficient time are districts permitted to use the student's response to intervention as a component of the eligibility decision-making process. Schools who choose to do this are encouraged to contact the OPI Special Education Division for guidance.

Essential Components of RTI

1. Evidence-Based Curriculum and Instruction

Evidence-based practice refers to the use of curriculum and interventions that have been demonstrated as effective by research. To increase the opportunity for students served at all levels of a multi-tiered model to benefit the RTI process framework, instruction and interventions delivered to students should be supported by evidence of their effectiveness. Evidence can be obtained from previous research *or* ongoing local evaluation and is important for ruling out poor curriculum or intervention as an explanation for inadequate student performance. To determine whether an intervention is effective via research or local evaluation, it is critical that the following criteria are met during evaluations: (a) the procedures for the intervention are clearly articulated; (b) a process is in place to ensure that procedures are followed; (c) the correct measures are used to evaluate outcomes that result from the intervention delivery; and (d) an appropriate means of comparing student progress both with and without the intervention is in place.

Selecting evidence-based curriculum/intervention

It is important for school personnel to view the evidence that they read through the lens of their particular school and classroom settings. They must determine if the instructional strategies and routines are a good match for the particular population of students they teach.
Are the instructional practices socially valid considering the local culture and are they likely to provide students with instruction that research predicts will result in learning a skill or content?

Teachers and administrators must ask the following questions when reviewing reading materials, but the same questions apply when selecting math, written expression, science, and social studies materials (The International Reading Association):

- o Does this program or instructional approach provide systematic and explicit instruction in the particular strategies that have been proven to produce high rates of achievement in reading (or another subject) for the children I teach?

- o Does the program or instructional approach provide flexibility for use with the range of learners in the various classrooms where it will be used? Are there assessment tools that assist teachers in identifying individual learning needs? Are there a variety of strategies and activities that are consistent with diverse learning needs?

o   Does the program or instructional approach provide a collection of high-quality materials that are diverse in level of difficulty, genre, topic, and cultural representation to meet the individual needs and interests of the children with whom it will be used?

In addition to examining the match between the instructional approach or program and the children they teach, administrators and teachers also must consider the match between the instructional approach or program and the resources available for implementation (e.g., Hayes, 1997; Richardson, 1994). Questions such as the following may help teachers and administrators assess appropriateness of resources and professional development opportunities:

o   How many instructional personnel will be required to effectively implement the program or instructional approach? That is, can the program be implemented by a classroom teacher alone, or will it require additional instructional personnel?

o   What types of professional development (and time) will be necessary for effective implementation of the program or instructional approach?

o   What adjustments to existing academic programs and practices will be necessary for effective implementation of the program or instructional approach?

There are a considerable number of evidence-based reading programs and interventions that have been identified as "promising" and are readily available to schools (See Table 5). "Promising" programs, interventions, and/or practices are those that have initially demonstrated effectiveness, but have not had sufficient research by independent researchers to qualify as "evidence-based" yet. Effectiveness research in the area of math and other content areas is not nearly as exhaustive as the research that has been done in reading at the present time.

Table 5. Web-based resources for evidence-based programs/interventions

Organization	Web address	Reading	Math	Behavior	Science	Other
What Works Clearinghouse (U.S. Dept of Education, IES)	www.w-w-c.org	X	X	X		X
The International Campbell Collaboration	www.campbellcollaboration.org					X
Promising Practices Network	www.promisingpractices.net	X				X
Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts; University of Texas (Austin)	www.texasreading.org	X				X
The Florida Center for Reading Research; Florida State University	www.fcrr.org	X				
Big Ideas in Beginning Reading; University of Oregon	www.reading.uoregon.edu	X				
Northwest Regional Educational Library	www.nwrel.org	X	X			
U.S. Department of Education Comprehensive Centers	www.centeroninstruction.org	X	X	X	X	X

The providers listed above update resources on their web pages as information becomes available.

Through experience and training, skilled teachers employ instructional techniques that have the greatest impact on learning. They effectively:

- Provide explicit and systematic lessons.
- Determine instructional timelines and targets.
- Select and use a variety of research-based materials, including core subject programs, appropriately leveled texts, and hands-on materials (e.g., math manipulatives).
- Form flexible groups to meet the needs of individual students (e.g., one-on-one, pairs, small groups, whole group).
- Administer progress monitoring assessments to instruct and regroup students according to student knowledge and skill acquisition.
- Create a learning environment in which children have access to a variety of high-quality reading, writing, math, science, and social studies opportunities and materials.
- Create multiple opportunities for students to engage in sustained practice (e.g., reading, math) opportunities in a variety of authentic and isolated contexts (e.g., individual, partner, small group, whole group).
- Provide multiple opportunities for students to appropriately practice and apply skills in a variety of contexts.
- Manage student activity and behavior.
- Utilize instructional resources effectively.
- Engage parental support.

Effective instruction is delivered through explicit and systematic lessons

Academic failure can be attributed to the erroneous assumption that all students know how to complete a task without explicit lessons. More than any other factor, explicit instruction is essential to student achievement. Research supports that skills and strategies must be explicitly and systematically taught. They must be modeled and practiced in multiple settings with a variety of materials. A gradual withdrawal of teacher support must follow until the student achieves the desired level of automaticity and is independent. "**Explicit instruction** is instruction that *does not leave anything to chance*, and it *does not make assumptions* about skills and knowledge that children acquire on their own" (Torgeson, 2004). Outstanding and effective teachers understand the following sequential components of **explicit instruction:**

- **Direct Explanation**
  Teacher <u>names</u> and <u>defines</u> the skill or strategy to be learned. This definition includes explaining <u>why</u> the skill or strategy is important and <u>when</u> it is used.
- **Teacher Modeling**
  Teacher overtly demonstrates a skill or strategy that a student will learn. Through modeling, instruction becomes less vague and more concrete for students. Explicit instruction provides a greater likelihood that students will demonstrate mastery.
- **Guided Practice**
  Teacher provides students with support and guidance as they practice the skill or strategy independently or in small groups. Prompts, specific corrective feedback and praise related to the new skill or strategy are provided. Teacher support gradually fades as the student takes responsibility for using the skill or strategy independently.

- **Independent practice**

Students are provided with multiple opportunities to apply the newly acquired skill or strategy on their own. Through independent practice, students continue to review and practice the skills and strategies learned.

- **Progress Monitoring**
  Teacher monitors and evaluates student mastery of the new skill or strategy. Future instruction is designed to target skills and strategies that require additional review and practice.

Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction should be provided to accelerate learning and maximize student achievement for all students as part of Tier 1 instruction. The classroom teacher should provide flexible instructional grouping of students based on their ongoing identified needs. Classroom teachers should be clear about *what* they are trying to teach and *why* it is important. Research has shown that teachers are often too random in their delivery of instruction, unclear as to what they are teaching, and unable to define the succinct reason for instruction.

When differentiating, teachers should:
  o have clear objectives for instruction.
  o deliver targeted instruction aligned with standards.
  o provide focused activities.
  o adjust the instructional complexity through differentiation.

In Tier 2 and Tier 3, differentiation is provided through addressing specific targeted needs through targeted intervention. This instruction occurs in smaller groups with increased intensity. Often another educator delivers Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction, but coordinates with the classroom teacher. Progress monitoring occurs more frequently and provides the information needed to make instructional decisions.

Use all available resources to teach all students.

2. Ongoing Assessment

Assessment is the process of collecting, reviewing, and using information to make educational decisions about student learning. The type of information collected is determined by the intended use of the results or type of decision that is needed. An effective skills-based reading, math, or written expression program should include the following kinds of assessment: screening, benchmark, progress monitoring, diagnostic, outcome, and informal. Some assessments can be used for multiple purposes.

Screening Assessments involve all children and are usually done at set benchmark points such as the beginning and middle of the school year or the end of a unit in a core program. Screenings are quick and efficient measures of overall ability or efficient measures of *critical skills* known to be strong *indicators* that predict student performance in a specific subject.

Diagnostic Assessments help teachers plan instruction by providing in-depth information about students' skills and instructional needs. Diagnostic assessments are individually administered to students at risk for failure and provide specific information needed to guide appropriate instruction.

Progress Monitoring Assessments involve frequent measurement to determine whether students are making adequate academic progress toward a specific preset goal with critical skills and current instruction. These assessments should be administered as part of the instructional routine: weekly, biweekly, or monthly depending on student need. The more intense the intervention (Tiers 2 and 3), the more frequently progress monitoring should occur.

Outcome Assessments provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of instruction and indicate student year-end academic achievement when compared to grade-level performance standards. These assessments are administered to all students at the end of a grading period and/or school year.

Informal Assessments provide additional information about student learning to assist educators in meeting the needs of students. Teachers and specialists often use this type of assessment to determine if further diagnostics are indicated in a certain area.

Assessment Fidelity

Data generated by assessments can only be as reliable as the extent to which the assessments are implemented in a consistent and standardized way. Again, without measuring the fidelity of assessment implementation, student responses cannot be evaluated with any reliability. Student test results depend upon assessments being implemented and scored correctly. Ways to check integrity of assessment implementation include assessor checklists, outside observation, and random checks of scoring accuracy. Of course, initial training for an assessment tool should include practice to competency in administering the assessment. Periodic "booster sessions" where assessors are retrained on assessments are an important way to prevent "drift" in the way assessments are implemented and scored. Most assessments include administration checklists that can be used for integrity checks.

3. Collaborative Teaming

Collaboration among all educators is critical to the RTI process. "All educators for all students" means that all educators, each and every one of us, are accountable for the educational outcomes of each and every student. The educational system of the past was compartmentalized due largely to funding streams that earmarked monies for meeting the needs of specific populations of students; for example, special education services for students with disabilities and Title 1 tutoring services for students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Over time, a culture of "this is my kid-that is your kid" developed because specific personnel provided educational supports for specific students in these programs. For example, the special education "Resource" teacher only provides intervention and support to students on IEPs or the school psychologist can only work with students being evaluated for special education eligibility or those receiving

special education services. In the RTI framework, collaborative teams are formed using the resource, talent and personnel across the educational system.

One of the finest outcomes thus far for the educators who have been a part of the Montana RTI Pilot Project is a renewed and deeper understanding and appreciation for each other. The time and space created by the building leaders for educators to meet to have discussions about RTI processes, grade-level issues, assessment processes, data, and about individual students offer the opportunity for a broadened perspective and insight into what works best for students and for them as well. The collaboration across educators, specialists, and administrators provides the kind of support and teamwork that creates a positive and meaningful working climate. The Montana RTI School Readiness Checklist found in Table 9 at the end of this framework can be used as a survey tool to identify areas in need of professional development or clarification before beginning the RTI process.

What Collaborative Teams Do

In establishing collaborative teams, schools need to plan, organize, develop procedural guidelines, continue to evaluate effectiveness, and make adjustments as needed. Effective teams use a problem-solving process as defined previously in this manual and includes tasks such as:

- **Defining the "problem"**
  What is the difference between current performance and expectation for minimum proficiency?
- **Analyzing why it is occurring**
  Is it a "can't do" skill, a "won't do" skill, or a fluency issue? Collect and analyze data about Instruction, Curriculum, Environment, and Learner (ICEL). Use student Records, Interviews, Observations, and Testing (RIOT) to assess.
- **Developing and implementing an intervention action plan**
  Link assessment to intervention; target the skill(s) in need of intervention. Set appropriate and ambitious learning goals. Intervention(s) include the duration and intensity, the instructor(s), which progress monitoring instruments, how often progress monitoring should occur, what intervention fidelity measures, how often, and who will administer fidelity measure. Plan how to keep parents informed and involved.
- **Monitor student progress and intervention fidelity**
  Coordinate systematic and frequent student progress monitoring and intervention fidelity data collection. Accumulate data, graph, and report to team, student, and parents.
- **Evaluate intervention plan effectiveness**
  Was intervention implemented with fidelity? If so, what does the accumulated progress monitoring data indicate about learning rate and grade-level expectation? If the intervention was not implemented with fidelity, why? Does more training on intervention implementation need to take place, or more consideration on the feasibility of the intervention? Cannot attribute student non-progress to intervention unless the plan was implemented with fidelity.
- **Data-based decisions about intervention**
  Make decision about whether to: (a) continue intervention (if progress is being made toward making the set goal), (b) adjust intervention; if little or no progress is being made, decide to increase dosage (more time), change intervention, etc.;

and (c) exit student if goal has been met and student is maintaining learning rate at or above minimum grade-level proficiency.

Student Data Team (Also known as Grade-Level Teams)

Student data teams will vary from school to school based on need. In very small schools, the Leadership Team (see essential component: strong leadership for more information on leadership teams) may also be the Student Data Team. In larger schools with multiple classes at each grade level, schools may decide to have several Student Data Teams, based upon grade level. For example, there could be a K-2 Student Data Team and a Grades 3-6 Student RTI Team. It is recommended that at least one member of grade-level teams should be from the RTI Leadership Team.

Table 6 lists different configurations of collaborative student RTI teams and their purpose that are widely used by schools and/or districts. These examples are provided to facilitate thought about what might best fit your school's needs, resources, and culture.

The RTI practices are built on the belief that all students can learn. One of the biggest changes associated with RTI is that it requires educators to shift thinking: from the student to the intervention. This means that the initial evaluation no longer focuses on "what is wrong with the student." Instead, there is a shift to an examination of the curricular, instructional, and environmental variables that change inadequate learning progress. Once the correct set of intervention variables have been identified, schools must then provide the means and systems for delivering resources so that effective teaching and learning can occur. In doing so, schools must provide resources in a manner that is directly proportional to students' needs. This requires strong leadership by school administrators to reconsider, and most likely restructure, current resource allocation systems so that financial and other support structures for RTI practices can be established and sustained.

The student data team utilize their time in meetings effectively and efficiently by appointing team members to perform different roles that facilitate meetings. These roles are:

- Meeting Facilitator (directs team through the meeting)

- Case Manager (makes sure all stakeholders are invited and present; coordinates implementation of team decisions)

- Scribe (takes notes and completes the RTI Intervention Plan document)

- Timekeeper (redirects team to immediate focus of meeting; keeps and calls "time" for various meeting components in problem solving)

In the Montana RTI framework, local schools make decisions about the composition of and number of collaborative problem-solving teams that will best meet the needs of students, staff, the local culture, resources, and needs. At the very least, a school should have at least two teams: (a) RTI Leadership Team; and (b) the Student Data Team.

Table 6. Examples of School Collaborative Teams

Team	Recommended Members	Purpose
Grade-Level Team (e.g., all 2nd grade teachers OR a K-2 team)	• All grade-level teachers • Instructional coach and/or specialist (reading, math, etc.) • Teacher specialists as appropriate (e.g., speech, school psychologist, Title I, literacy coach, ELL teacher) • Administrator	• Ensure consistency of effective instructional practices within and across grade levels. • Share responsibility for student achievement, using student data as a base for instructional decision making. • Act as a problem-solving organization that assists each other in meeting the literacy needs of students
Reading/Math **(Subject area)** **Team**	• Homeroom teachers • Instructional coach and/or specialist (reading, math, etc.) • Special educator, other specialists as appropriate • Administrator	• Provide assistance to teachers whose students are not reaching grade-level benchmarks by developing an instructional plan based on student's record of assessment, performance data, and teacher input. • Foster student learning by reviewing student data to make informed decisions about curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
Data Team	• Homeroom teachers • Instructional coach and/or specialist (reading, math, etc.) • Special educator, other specialists as appropriate • Administrator	- Assemble and examine data. - Identify specific concerns from school test reports and subgroup data. - Interpret school data to determine appropriate/ambitious goals. - Determine appropriate intervention to reach goals. - Determine what data will be used to monitor progress and document success in reaching goals. - Identify data patterns.

Schools can organize and reorganize teams during the implementation of the RTI process because this is a dynamic process in which procedural changes, especially in teams, are made to meet the ongoing changes in need and resources of a school. The key to teaming in the RTI

process is leadership, collaboration across educators and the use of the problem-solving process to drive decisions. How teams are configured, when they meet, responsibilities of team members, and so on are all local decisions that are made through collaborative discussions.
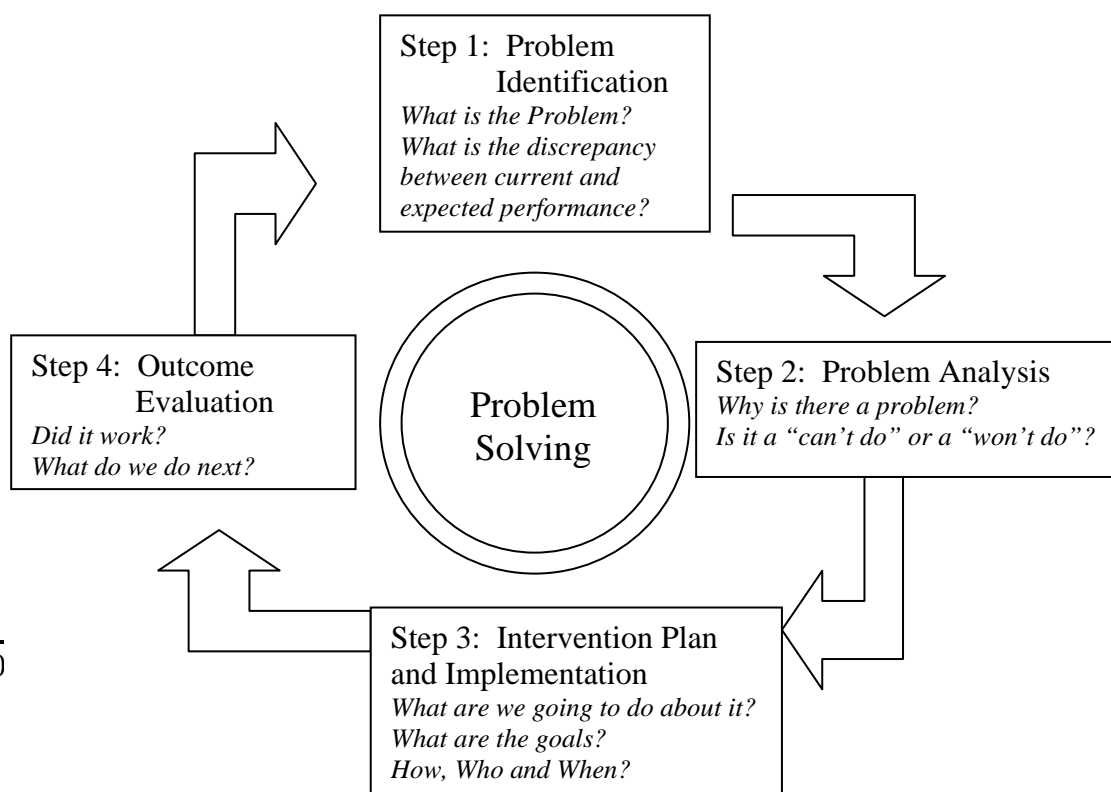
4. Data-Based Decision Making

The problem-solving process serves as the overarching structure that drives assessment and intervention activities. School collaborative teams must have detailed knowledge of and training in the problem-solving process. In addition, teams should have training in evaluation and decision-making procedures, such as universal screening to identify students at risk for academic difficulties, progress monitoring, and data-based decision making. The problem-solving model has been organized into a series of four steps and the questions answered by using the process are found in Table 7 below. It is important to understand that these steps are more than procedural formalities and the most essential part of the process is obtaining positive outcomes (and not merely following step). Figure 7 shows the cyclical processes using the problem-solving model to investigate students' learning difficulties.

Table 7. The Problem-Solving Model

Problem Solving Steps	Problem Solving Questions
Step 1. Problem Identification (define the problem)	What is the Problem?
Step 2. Problem Analysis (analyze why the problem occurs)	Why is it happening?
Step 3. Intervention Plan and Implementation	What can we do about it?
Step 4. Outcome Evaluation	Did it work?

Figure 7.   Using the problem-solving model to investigate students' learning difficulties

Step 1: Problem Identification
What is the Problem?
What is the discrepancy between current and expected performance?

Step 2: Problem Analysis
Why is there a problem?
Is it a "can't do" or a "won't do"?

Step 3: Intervention Plan and Implementation
What are we going to do about it?
What are the goals?
How, Who and When?

Step 4: Outcome Evaluation
Did it work?
What do we do next?

Problem Solving

5. Fidelity of Implementation

Fidelity of implementation is defined as the accurate and consistent application of an agreed upon procedure. In order for an outcome to be attributed to a plan, it is necessary to know if the plan was implemented at all, and then implemented as planned on a consistent basis. When plans, methods, or programs are implemented as planned, outcomes and data are established as being reliable and valid. In order for schools to establish accountability for student outcomes, it is critical to evaluate and document fidelity of implementation.

Ongoing fidelity checks should be scheduled to ensure that a plan or process is being implemented with fidelity. Over time we tend to streamline processes as they become more familiar to us so that a plan or process may be subtly and unintentionally changed and no longer resemble the original. Although we think we are implementing the process, we may not accurately or consistently be doing so. Without fidelity checks, decisions can be based on data that is no longer reliable as an outcome of the process. To ensure valid and reliable data upon which to base educational decisions at the individual and system levels, fidelity checks are absolutely essential. The continued full implementation of the RTI process, of prevention and intervention activities, and of assessment is dependent upon adherence to the plan, implementation fidelity.

Fidelity includes trust in those who perform RTI. It is suggested that an RTI process includes:
- District initiation and support of RTI through the provision of training to general education teachers
- trained individuals act as coaches
- administrators leading, supporting and understanding how RTI programs work
- periodic whole system checks
- administrator and/or instructional coach/specialist does program fidelity checks (i.e., principal and/or coach walk-throughs)
- problem-solving teams (PST) which include the teacher interventionist
- providing a one-time-per-year system analysis (cumulative data) that informs and drives next year's improvement or changes to training and subsequent interventions
- clarification of school's decision-making points
- identification of interventions for reading and math
- parent involvement including:
  - Written documentation of expressed concerns
  - Information presented without jargon
  - Documentation of participation

Measuring Fidelity

A number of strategies that range from direct to indirect approaches are available for monitoring fidelity/integrity:

direct observation - usually by outside person who uses a checklist to evaluate whether specific procedures are being used as planned or trained. An example is when a principal observes teachers as part of an evaluation.

behavior rating scales – usually a self-report whereby the person reports on a rating scale how often and how accurately a procedure is done.

self-reporting strategies - usually a checklist that lists all components that the person checks off as each component is implemented.

permanent products - documents generated by the process that can be collected and reviewed; for example, assessment testing protocol and scoring is collected and a certain number of the protocols are checked for correct scoring.

implementation manual – an implementation manual that is explicit by defining and listing steps in an intervention, assessment, or other plan. Many times the manual provides a specific script of what to say. Generally, the more specific the manual, the greater the potential for fidelity of implementation.

In the RTI process, four activities are assessed on an ongoing basis to document fidelity:

- The RTI process implementation fidelity
- Prevention fidelity (Tier 1, Core Instruction or Positive Behavior Supports)
- Intervention fidelity (small group and individual)
- Assessment fidelity

6. Ongoing Training and Professional Development

RTI Implementation Requires Skilled Educators

Skilled teachers have the knowledge and ability to deliberately plan instruction and select appropriate materials that align with Montana State Standards. They make informed decisions based on research findings to increase the likelihood their instruction will lead to improvements in student achievement and have comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the following:

- Montana State Standards in Core Subject areas.
- Evidence-based reading instruction emphasizing the five critical elements: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.
- Evidence-based best practice in math instruction based on state standards, National Science Foundation (NSF) recommendations and National Council of Teachers of Math (NCTM) lessons and basal-based instruction.
- Purpose and instructional use of screening, benchmark, diagnostic, progress monitoring and outcome assessments.

Skilled teachers select and administer ongoing skill assessments that identify the instructional needs of <u>all</u> students. The best practice teaching cycle is: (a) concept instruction (teach, model, practice), (b) assessing for learning, and (c) differentiating instruction based upon assessment data. When this cycle is ongoing, teaching is supported and student learning is maximized. Professional development needs should be evaluated and training should be provided at each phase of implementation. For example, teaming in an RTI process will require staff to be trained in "problem solving and data-based decision making." This is a very specific process that is key to the RTI process.

All staff should be trained in using the assessment tools and processes, including practice administering and scoring. Even if staff are not administering the assessment tools all staff will need to understand how to interpret the data which they will use to make instructional decisions. Periodic "booster sessions" where assessors are retrained on assessments are an important way to prevent "drift" in the way assessments are implemented and scored.

7. Community and Family Involvement

Involving parents at all phases is a key aspect of a successful RTI process. Parent support of their child's education increases the likelihood of success. Benefits for students include higher achievement, higher rate of homework completion, positive attitudes about school, and observation of similarities between home and school. Benefits for parents include receiving ideas from school on how to help their children, learning more about educational programs and how the school works, becoming more confident about ways to help their child learn, and gaining a more positive view of teachers and the school.

Schools must make a concerted effort to involve parents as early as possible, beginning with instruction in the core curriculum. This can be done through traditional methods such as parent-teacher conferences, regularly scheduled meetings, or by other methods (see Table 8). It is especially important to consider using community outreach through various community and private agencies, cultural groups, etc., that will inform parents who might typically avoid school involvement. Parent awareness of the RTI process at your school empowers them to understand and celebrate with their child as the school notifies parents of student progress on a regular basis.

Schools should provide parents with written information about its RTI program and be prepared to answer questions about RTI processes. Many schools that have already implemented RTI have prepared parent handouts that explain the process at their schools along with answers to commonly asked questions. Parents should also be informed about the purpose of schoolwide screening measures that are implemented three times per year to not only identify students at risk, but also to assist in matching student skill to instruction. It is important for parents to understand that as a result of the screening measures, their child will be challenged by instruction no matter what the skill level. This means that students who are struggling will get help to build expected skills. It also means that students who are gifted will be challenged with skill-level appropriate instruction. The more parents are informed and involved, the greater the opportunity for successful RTI outcomes.

When parents are made aware of the whole process and then are notified that their child is in need of intervention, they understand this means extra help for their child. An outcome of the

Montana RTI Pilot Project is the realization that parents are much more knowledgeable about their child's academic struggles by the time the child is referred for formal evaluation for special education because that parent has been continually informed about their child's response to increasingly more intense Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. As a result, it is recommended that parents be notified about the need for Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 interventions, and when appropriate parents could be considered for inclusion during the problem-solving process. Parents can be instrumental in intervention planning as a team member, as well as providing follow-up at home when needed.

Because RTI is a method of delivering the general education curriculum for all students, written consent is *not* required before administering universal screenings or targeted diagnostic assessments within a multi-tiered RTI system when these tools are used to determine instructional need. However, when a student fails to respond to increasingly intensive Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions and the decision is made to evaluate a student for special education eligibility, written consent must be obtained in accordance with special education procedures.

Table 8. Involving Parents and Community in the RTI Process

School Events	How to Involve Parents
Beginning of school year for all students: "Back to School Night" Parent-Teacher Conferences Community Outreach (various agencies, cultural groups)	Send notice/handout home to all parents explaining the RTI process in place to address needs of all students; may include parent-teacher conferences, school newsletter items and success stories. A special effort for community outreach should be made so that parents who typically avoid school contact can also become aware of how the school plans to address the needs of all students.
Tier 1 data collection: CBM, DIBELS (screening); math and reading assessments; report cards; curriculum-based assessments (e.g., chapter tests) and informal assessments; MontCAS reports; any universally administered standardized, reliable, and valid tests results	Notify parent through written notice or document; provide contact information if parent has questions or needs clarification.
Tier 1 and Tier 2: individual student issues addressed	Conduct parent/teacher conference.
Tier 2: RTI Student Team meets to address problems of identified students, design intervention and progress monitoring	Invite parent to attend these meetings; solicit input in a formal manner (parent student information sheet) if parent unable to attend.
Tier 2: documentation of progress	Continue to send home reports, data reviewed by team; involve parent in the intervention process. (Note: If we are teaching in a different way or teaching a targeted skill, the parent should know about this and be guided in helping the student at home to the extent the parent is willing and able.)
Tier 2 and Tier 3: RTI Student Team meetings to review progress and make instructional decisions	Invite parents to participate in meetings and/or receive any of the data that is used by the team with a summary of the meeting in writing accompanied by a follow-up telephone call and/or parent/teacher conference. Provide a graph of progress monitoring toward intervention goals to parent.
Tier 2 and Tier 3: decisions that result in a student spending *more time* in intensive instruction than typical peers	Send formal letter home explaining the need for more time in instruction to help accelerate learning; make follow-up call to address parent questions.

8. Strong Leadership

RTI Leadership Team (or Core Team)

The RTI Steering Team may be comprised of:

- school principal
- general education teacher(s)
- special education teacher and/or director
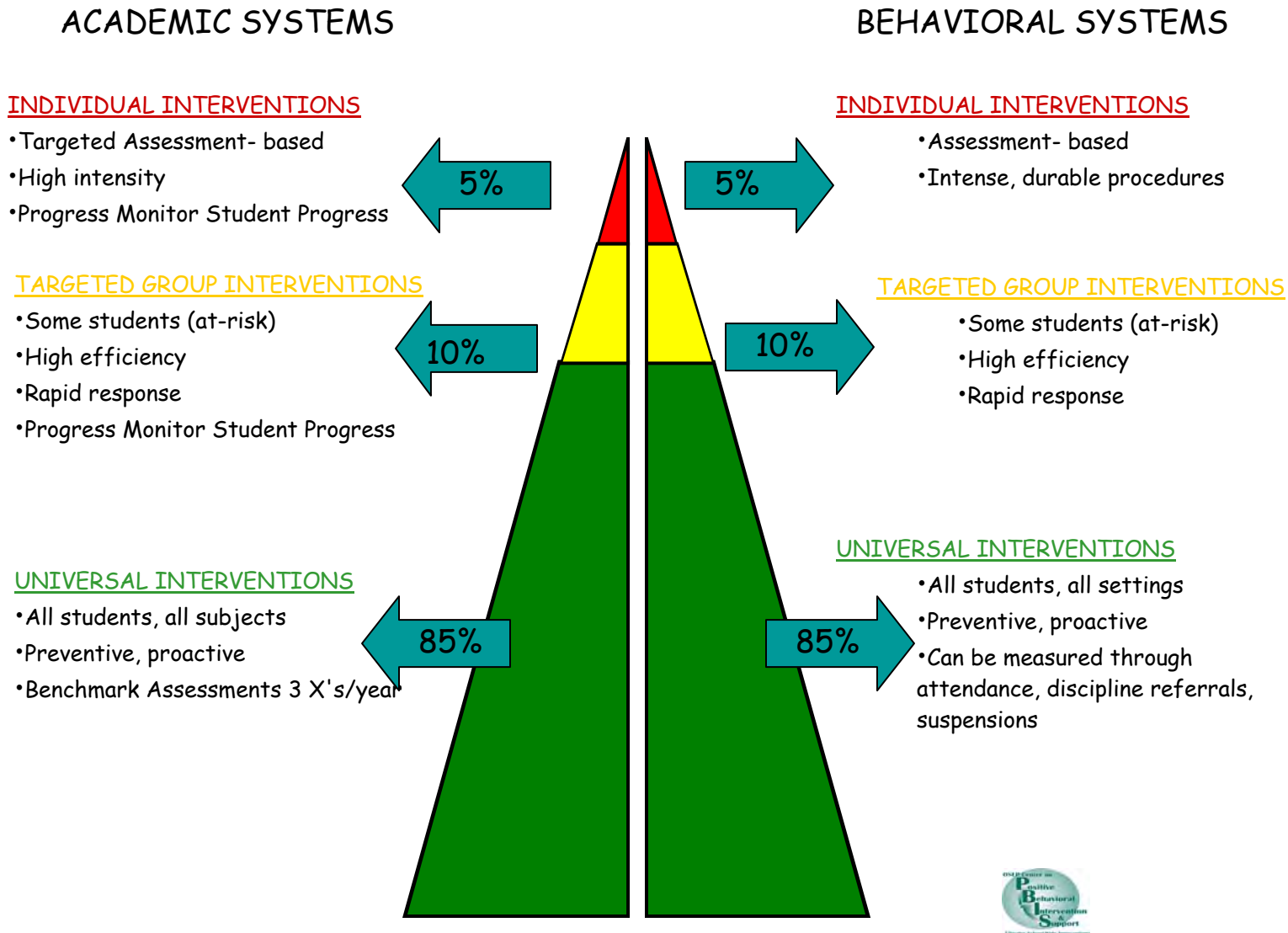- school psychologist
- school counselor
- parent(s)

The purpose of the RTI Leadership Team is to plan for the implementation of the RTI process, set the school agenda for instructional periods, all assessment, RTI team meetings, ongoing staff professional training and development, and to review school-level data procedures to make decisions about ongoing instruction effectiveness. The RTI Leadership Team also monitors the fidelity of the RTI process implementation to ensure the process is successfully implemented and maintained using the essential components needed for the integrity of the process.

The RTI Leadership Team may also serve as a liaison between the school and the local community and agencies. It is highly suggested that the community is made aware of how school leaders are structuring the school learning environment. The achievement made by students and staff should be actively "advertised" to community service clubs, agencies, and citizens via meetings, local newspapers, etc. Community leaders and private citizens may be interested in volunteering for activities as well.

To fully incorporate an RTI program, schools and/or districts must expand their comprehensive plans to include assessment of its readiness and capacity to adopt and implement RTI practices for all academic areas and behavior. Table 9 is the Montana RTI School Self-Assessment to help assess a school district's readiness for RTI in reading and behavior. Table 10 is a tool for schools to use when planning their Next Steps in implementation. The RTI is a complicated process that takes time. A district's or school's comprehensive RTI plan is expected to take five years or more to fully implement; thus are encouraged to start small and move toward expansion slowly and intentionally. This is due to the considerable amount of professional development that needs to be provided in the beginning stages of establishing RTI process systems to build capacity. It will be equally important for all staff to receive ongoing professional development support after an RTI system has been put in place.

Before implementing the RTI essential components, the school, district, or rural cooperative educational area should first evaluate the extent of preparedness, including staff acceptability for systems change. Schools, districts, and/or rural cooperative educational areas should develop a comprehensive and strategic plan for implementing RTI that includes an evaluation of the current infrastructure relative to leadership, teaming, curriculum, screening and professional development.

Figure 8. Three-Tier Model of School Supports

ACADEMIC SYSTEMS

<u>INDIVIDUAL INTERVENTIONS</u>
- Targeted Assessment- based
- High intensity
- Progress Monitor Student Progress

<u>TARGETED GROUP INTERVENTIONS</u>
- Some students (at-risk)
- High efficiency
- Rapid response
- Progress Monitor Student Progress

<u>UNIVERSAL INTERVENTIONS</u>
- All students, all subjects
- Preventive, proactive
- Benchmark Assessments 3 X's/year

BEHAVIORAL SYSTEMS

<u>INDIVIDUAL INTERVENTIONS</u>
- Assessment- based
- Intense, durable procedures

<u>TARGETED GROUP INTERVENTIONS</u>
- Some students (at-risk)
- High efficiency
- Rapid response

<u>UNIVERSAL INTERVENTIONS</u>
- All students, all settings
- Preventive, proactive
- Can be measured through attendance, discipline referrals, suspensions

5%   5%

10%   10%

85%   85%

"All educators for all children."

OPI Contact Information

To Learn More About RTI in Montana:

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Glossary of RTI Terms

Accommodations: Accommodations are practices and procedures in the areas of presentation, response, setting, and timing/scheduling that provide equitable access during instruction and assessments for students with disabilities/504/ELL. Accommodations are intended to reduce or even eliminate the effects of a student's disability; they do not reduce learning expectations. (See USOE Accommodations Guidelines for examples)

Alignment: The process of matching instruction and materials to Montana grade-level standards.

Assessment: Evaluate tools of different types and purposes that yield data from which to make educational decisions. Assessment in RTI includes screening, benchmark, progress monitoring, diagnostic, informal, and outcome assessment.

Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP):   A specific intervention plan that is developed as a result of a FBA to assist students in need of intensive prosocial skill development. The BIP describes the function of the antisocial behavior, delineates the replacement behavior(s) to be taught, describes reinforcement and response-cost procedures to be utilized in the development and maintenance of prosocial skill(s).

Collaboration: A systematic process between two or more people with shared goals and perceived outcomes occurring in a climate of trust.

Collaborative Team: A group of two or more people described above that meets on a scheduled basis and fills a specific function or purpose. Collaborative teams can be formed at school, district and rural educational cooperative levels. School-based teams are developed and sustained as determined by need and are accessible to any administrator or teacher concerned with the educational needs of students.

Curriculum-Based Evaluation: Any set of measurement procedures that uses direct observation and recording of a student's performance in a local curriculum as a basis for gathering information to make instructional decisions. Four characteristics of CBE are: (a) assess students directly using materials in which they are being instructed, (b) administration of a measure is generally brief (1-5 minutes), (c) the measure can be used frequently and is sensitive to small, incremental change, and (d) data can be displayed graphically.

Data-Based Decision Making: The process of planning for student success (both academic and

behavioral) through the use of ongoing progress monitoring and analysis of the data.

Differentiated Instruction: A matching of instruction to meet the different needs of learners in a given classroom by modifying delivery, time, content, process, product, and the learning environment. One or more of these elements can be modified to provide differentiation.

Evaluation: Summarizing assessment results, then making decisions based on these results.

Evidence-Based (EBI):   Refers to empirical research that applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge. This includes research that: employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment; has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review; involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn; relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and can be generalized.

Explicit Instruction: Instruction that is clear, evident, and observable. Learning objectives, modeling, practice, and immediate feedback are employed.

504 Act: A student is eligible for accommodations under Section 504 if the student has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more of the student's major life activities that impacts education.

Fidelity: A demonstration yielding data that the RTI process, instructional programs, strategies, materials, and assessments are implemented with accuracy and are consistently delivered as they have been designed and validated.

Flexible Service Delivery: Describes the prescriptive, focused, research-based interventions provided to students by any trained or skilled staff member, regardless of the child's special or general education categorization or the educator's special or general education job description.

Functional Behavioral
Assessment (FBA):   A behavioral evaluation to determine the functional aspect of behavior. A systematic evaluation including observation, surveys, and interviews is conducted to determine the key antisocial behaviors in need of intervention. The intervention teaches new

	skills that result in the same function with at least equal reinforcement value and that is socially acceptable.
Implicit Instruction:	An instructional ideology that assumes that students are naturally active learners who construct new personalized knowledge through linking prior knowledge and new knowledge. In implicit instruction, the teacher guides students only as much as is necessary for them to build their own understanding. Scaffolding, or teacher support through questioning and explaining, is provided only as needed.
Individual Education Plan (IEP):	A written statement for a student with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with the State of Montana Education Rules and Part B of IDEA 2004.
Individual Education Plan Team members (IEP):	At least one regular educator of the student, LEA representative, special education teacher, parent, student when appropriate, and person to interpret data, others as needed.
Instructional Intervention:	Explicit and systematic instruction delivered by highly skilled teachers tailored to meet the identified needs of struggling learners. This instruction is delivered in small groups.
Intense Intervention:	Explicit and systematic instruction delivered by highly skilled teacher specialists. This instruction is targeted and tailored to meet the needs of struggling learners in small groups or one-on-one with increased opportunities for practice and teacher feedback.
Intervention:	Provided by general and special educators, based on training, not title. Designed to help a student improve performance relative to a specific, realistic and measurable goal. Interventions are based upon valid information about present levels of performance relative to grade-level expectations, realistic implementation with fidelity, and may include modifications and accommodations. Interventions are multi-tiered, research-based, target-specific skills, time limited, and parent inclusive.
Modifications (Classroom and/or Assignment):	Providing modifications to students during classroom instruction classroom assessments may have the unintended consequence of reducing their opportunity to learn critical content. If students have not had access to critical, assessed content, they may be at risk for not meeting graduation requirements
Modifications(Assessments):	Changes in the test or assessment conditions that fundamentally alter the test score interpretation and comparability. Providing a student with a modification during a state accountability

assessment constitutes a test irregularity because it invalidates the student's test score.

Multisensory: Simultaneously engaging the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities.

Multi-Tiered Intervention: Provides different levels of intensity (core, strategic, intensive) based upon student response to instruction/intervention with ongoing progress monitoring and focused assessment.

Parent-School Partnerships: When parents and school staff collaborate for school success. In the RTI process at Tier 1, all parents are notified and encouraged to ask questions about the change in school procedures to effectively challenge students in the learning process. Parents are included in data collection and decision making through participation in the Student RTI Team. There is collaboration to develop effective intervention and practice opportunities for school and home.

Positive Behavioral and Intervention Supports: PBIS - A system of tiered preventative and remedial programs, activities, and interventions that provide a positive school climate and support student social/behavioral success.

"Problem": A "problem" in the problem-solving process is defined as the difference between grade/age-level expectations and student present level of performance (PLOP). The difference between these two numbers describes the nature and extent of the "problem" and serves as a guide for goal setting and intervention decisions. An example of a "problem" is a grade-level expectation in Grade 2 for a minimum oral reading fluency (ORF) rate in the fall of 23 correct words per minute (CWPM); a 2nd grade student ORF score of 10 CWPM; the "problem" is the difference between 23 and 10, or "13 CWPM."

Problem-Solving: A process that uses assessment data to identify the problem, analyze why the problem is occurring, develop and implement an intervention/instructional plan, and evaluate outcomes. The RTI Teams use problem solving to evaluate student learning and instructional effectiveness at both the system/school level as well as at the student level.

Progress Monitoring: The ongoing process of collecting and analyzing assessment data to determine student progress toward specific skill goals or general outcomes. At Tier 2 and Tier 3, progress monitoring data is used to make instructional decisions about the effectiveness of intervention to accelerate student learning that increases the learning rate and enables the student to meet a specific goal designed to meet at least minimum proficiency levels.

Research-based:	Interchangeable term with "evidence-based."
Scaffolding:	Support given to assist students in learning a skill through explicit instruction, modeling, questioning, and feedback, etc., to ensure student performance. Scaffolding should gradually be withdrawn as students become more independent of teacher support.
Secondary:	Tier 2 intervention level in a Positive Behavioral and Intervention Support (PBIS) system that is delivered to the students in need of additional training and supports for behavioral success. These are often delivered in a small group of students with similar training and support needs.
Skill:	Something a student knows how to do expertly and automatically. Basic skills of reading, written expression, and math are critical life skills.
Special Education:	Special education is specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability, including instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and instruction in physical education. The term includes speech-language pathology services and may include other related services, travel training, and applied technology education, if they meet the definition of special education.
Strategy:	A conscious use of a specific, evidence-based method.
Supplemental Intervention:	An addition to Tier 1 classroom instruction targeted to meet specific needs of students in one or more of the five critical elements of reading instruction.
Supplemental Materials:	Materials that are aligned to and support the core instructional program.
Systematic Instruction:	A carefully planned sequence for targeted instruction.
Targeted:	Focused instruction on an identified skill.
Tertiary:	Tier 3 intervention level in a Positive Behavioral and Intervention Support (PBIS) system that is delivered to the few students in need of very specific, unique, and intensive supports for success. These are often part of a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) that is the result of a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) evaluation.
Tier 1 Intervention:	Tier 1 interventions are actually preventative programs that are provided to all students in a classroom, school, district, or rural educational cooperative, regardless of individual needs. Examples

include: "Bully-proofing," "character education," evidence-based core curriculum and instructional practices, "Guided Reading."

Tier 2 Intervention:	Tier 2 intervention is strategic and targeted intervention that is implemented as a result of assessment that indicates a student is not making adequate gains from Tier 1 instruction/programs. Tier 2 intervention is typically delivered in small groups of students with similar skill concerns. Examples include "Sound Partners," "Readwell," social skills training, "Knowing Mathematics."
Tier 3 Intervention:	Tier 3 interventions are for students who require highly individualized, systematic, and explicit instruction to accelerate learning rate and/or to support learning. Intervention is considered to be intensive and is typically delivered one-on-one or in very small groups (2-3) of students with similar skill needs.
Tutoring:	Additional practice for struggling students provided by trained individuals. Tutoring does not serve as an intervention. Tutoring may also be conducted between peers, either within grade, or cross-grade peer tutoring.
Universal:	Tier 1 preventative programs, services, activities in a Positive Behavioral and Intervention Support (PBIS) system that is school-wide and delivered to all students and staff in the school building.

Table 9: MONTANA RTI SELF-ASSESSMENT

School Community is Committed to the RTI Framework

Level of Implementation				Feature	Priority for Improvement/Maintenance			
Don't Know	In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	**School Community Committed to RTI**	High	Medium	Low	Comments
				1.Administration supports RTI (allocation of funding, release time, training for staff, respect for team decisions)				
				2.Need for RTI team established and commitment gained among 70% or more of school staff				
				3.RTI processes, procedures and philosophy are included in school/district policy and handbooks for students, staff, and community				
				4.School/district allows time for personnel to effectively implement the RTI process (meeting time, professional development)				
				5.Parents and community members included in the school decision-making process				
				6. School board, district staff, and community understand the RTI Framework				
				7.School staff understand the RTI Framework and are ready for implementation				

RTI Essential Component: Ongoing Assessment

Level of Implementation				Feature	Priority for Improvement/Maintenance			
Don't Know	In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	**Ongoing Assessment**	High	Medium	Low	Comments
				8. Universal screening system is in place to measure and monitor student progress				
				9. Diagnostic procedures are in place				
				10. Progress monitoring is systematic, documented, and shared among staff				

				Feature				
				11. Clear assessment procedures are in place (screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcome assessments)(when, where, who)				
				12. Processes are in place to check the integrity of assessment procedures (e.g.,assessors checklist, outside observation, random checks)				

RTI Essential Component: Evidence-Based Curriculum and Effective Instruction

Level of Implementation				Feature	Priority for Improvement/Maintenance			
Don't Know	In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	**Evidence-Based Curriculum and Effective Instruction**	High	Medium	Low	Comments
				13. School/district allocates funding for start-up materials to effectively implement the RTI process (e.g., evidence-based reading and intervention programs and assessments)				
				14. School/district provides personnel to effectively implement the RTI process (e.g., instructional coach, paras, administration, data collection)				
				15. Teachers provide flexible grouping of students based on their ongoing identified needs to maximize student learning				
				16. Personnel are in place to effectively provide instruction at Tiers 1-3 in all grades implementing RTI				
				17. Necessary *time* has been allocated to provide instruction (core program and interventions)				
				18. Evidence-based reading programs address the 5 components (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) explicitly and systematically				
				19. 3-5 Schoolwide positive behavior supports in place				
				20. Guidelines and expected behaviors are				

				Feature				
				directly taught/reviewed throughout the school year in all classrooms and all settings				
				21. System for reinforcing positive behaviors is in place				
				22. System of consequences is in place				
				23. System established for teaching school-wide behavior supports				

RTI Essential Component: Collaborative Teaming

Level of Implementation				Feature	Priority for Improvement/Maintenance			
Don't Know	In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	**Collaborative Teaming**	High	Medium	Low	Comments
				24.RTI team is established				
				25.RTI team meetings occur on a regular basis with consistent attendance				
				26.RTI team has developed written short-term and long-term data-based action plans using research based strategies				
				27.A referral process is in place to allow teachers to refer students who are beginning to display challenging behaviors (academic or social/emotional)				
				28.Staff can easily refer concerns to RTI team				
				29. Process in place for efficient integration of RTI team with other teams/initiatives (e.g., behavior, sped and Title I procedures, etc.)				
				30.Administrator is active and present for meetings/training				
				31.School teams receive ongoing training on RTI and best practices				
				32.RTI team works with staff to remedy problems or breakdowns in implementation				

RTI Essential Component: Data-based Decision Making

Level of Implementation				Feature	Priority for Improvement/Maintenance			
Don't Know	In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	**Data-based Decision Making**	High	Medium	Low	Comments
				33. School data collection system is in place and technology support is available at school/district level				
				34.Data is collected to determine site needs and status • School staff surveys/questionnaires • Parent surveys/questionnaires • Incident reports/office referrals • Assessment tools (e.g., Universal Screening, Diagnostic Assessments, Progress Monitoring) • Observations				
				35.Staff Member(s) have been identified for collecting and disseminating data to teachers in a timely manner				
				36.Data is summarized and analyzed				
				37. Data is used for decision-making— creating action plans and interventions				
				38.Data collection system allows for **ongoing** evaluation and decision making				
				39."Discipline/Behavior Referral" form provides necessary information for effective use of behavior-based data collection				
				40.Staff receives feedback on effectiveness of implementation of RTI process/practices				
				41.Individual student data routinely revisited to ensure at-risk students are making adequate progress				
				42.Student RTI team is established (also known as grade-level teams, data teams, or subject-area teams)				
				43.Student RTI team meetings occur on a regular basis with consistent attendance (also known as grade-level teams, data teams, or subject-area teams)				

RTI Essential Component: Fidelity of Implementation

Level of Implementation				Feature	Priority for Improvement/Maintenance			
Don't Know	In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	**Fidelity of Implementation**	High	Medium	Low	Comments
				44.Administrator is actively involved and knows the RTI processes (e.g., attends all trainings, involved in team meetings, knows the assessment procedures well, knows the reading and intervention programs well.)				
				45.Teachers teach reading/math programs as intended by publisher in order to maximize effectiveness				
				46.Scheduled and random, principal walk-throughs occur frequently				
				47.Instructional Coach/Specialist knows the programs and provides ongoing support to teachers				
				48.Instructional Coach/Specialist is in the classrooms and is checking the fidelity of the instruction daily				
				49.Action plans are continually being reviewed and updated				
				50.Periodic whole system checks are in place				

RTI Essential Component: Training and Professional Development

Level of Implementation				Feature	Priority for Improvement/Maintenance			
Don't Know	In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	**Training and Professional Development**	High	Medium	Low	Comments
				51.School/district provides funding and time for professional development opportunities to allow team and staff to continually add to or improve the RTI process				
				52.School staff have received training on the programs they are expected to teach				
				53.Teachers have access to systems of				

				Feature				
				support (e.g., observations, coaching, mentoring, material development, resource banks, problem-solving)				
				54. School staff have received professional development on all assessments and assessment procedures				
				55. RTI team(s) receive training on the RTI process and philosophy				
				56. New staff members are trained and included in the RTI process				
				57. RTI team members/school staff attend RTI Summer Institute (MBI and/or MRI)				

RTI Essential Component: Community and Family Involvement

Level of Implementation				Feature	Priority for Improvement/Maintenance			
Don't Know	In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	**Community and Family Involvement**	High	Medium	Low	Comments
				58. School understands the importance of school/family/community partnerships				
				59. Parents, students, and/or community are involved in RTI problem-solving processes				
				60. System in place for helping families support their child's learning at home				
				61. System in place for effectively communicating with families in various and helpful ways				

Adapted
from

Table 10: RTI Next Steps

Work with your school team.   **School Name:**_____

You've identified your present status in a variety of ways. Use that information and identify three "next steps" for your school.

_____

Identify three (3) action items as "next steps" for your school toward implementation of RTI.

Action 1:

Action 2:

Action 3:

_____
Decide if each action is:
- a.   something you already know how to do and will do
- b.   something you need more information about before you can take action
- c.   something for which you need training before you can take action

Action 1:   a   b   c   d (other): explain:_____

Action 2:   a   b   c   d (other): explain:_____

Action 3:   a   b   c   d (other): explain:_____

_____

Set a realistic deadline date for completion of each action:

Action 1:   We anticipate this will be completed by (date)_____

Action 2:   We anticipate this will be completed by (date)_____

Action 3:   We anticipate this will be completed by (date)_____

Montana Response to Intervention: RTI Framework

This product was developed with grant funds that require us to ask a few evaluation questions. Please take a couple of minutes to respond to the questions below. Thank you!

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree
This document is useful to me.	1	2	3	4
The information in this document is presented in a clear manner.	1	2	3	4
This information is new to me.	1	2	3	4
I would recommend this document to others.	1	2	3	4

I intend to use this product to:
- ☐ Gain knowledge about RTI
- ☐ Learn about education in Montana
- ☐ Inform others about RTI
- ☐ Implement the ideas and strategies described
- ☐ Not intending to use it for anything particular
- ☐ Other: _____

If used for instruction/professional development, how many participants do you anticipate? _____

If you are using the RTI Framework to implement RTI in your school or district, what additional support, information, or resources would be helpful to you?   _____

_____

I am a(n):

☐ Teacher	☐ Parent
☐ Paraprofessional	☐ Trustee
☐ Principal	☐ Educational Organization Representative
☐ Superintendent	☐ Professor
☐ School Psychologist	☐ Other: _____
☐ Educational Specialist	

I work in:

☐ Elementary School	☐ District
☐ Middle School	☐ Post-Secondary Education
☐ High School	☐ Other: _____

If you are school personnel, a trustee, or a parent, please provide school name and city:_____

_____

Please return this survey to:
Office of Public Instruction
Attn: Special Education, RTI Survey
P.O. Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620-2501

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